# MEMORIAL

OF THE

# BOARD OF CONTROLLERS

OF

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OF THE

## First School District of Pennsylvania,

COMPOSED OF THE

## CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA,

FOR SUCH A MODIFICATION OF THE LATE ACT OF ASSEMBLY, CONSOLIDATING THE

CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA

INTO ONE MUNICIPALITY, AS WILL RESTORE THE

Jurisdiction and Powers of School Directors.

ADOPTED

BY THE BOARD OF CONTROLLERS, MARCH 1, 1854.

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1854.

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## Office of the Controllers of Public Schools,

First School District of Pennsylvania.

*Philadelphia, February 2d*, 1854.

At a Meeting of the Controllers of Public Schools, First District of Pennsylvania, held at the Controllers' Chamber, on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 1854, the following Preamble and Resolution were adopted:

*Whereas*, The act of Assembly just passed for the purpose of consolidating the City and County of Philadelphia into one municipality, provides that each of the Wards shall constitute a separate School Section; *And whereas*, in the opinion of this Board, such a division of power in the management of the Schools of the City, will operate injuriously upon the system, as many of the Wards will contain Grammar or Secondary Schools, without Primaries to supply them with advancing pupils, while some will contain Primary Schools without Secondaries or Grammar Schools to which their pupils may be promoted; *And whereas*, under such a division and separation of the Schools, it will be impos-

sible for the Directors to superintend the progress of pupils, and may result in serious delays and inconveniences to the latter; *And whereas*, it is proper that this Board should make a correct representation of these facts to the Legislature, that the defects pointed out may be corrected by a Supplementary Act; therefore,

*Resolved*, That a Select Committee of five members of this Board be appointed, of which the President shall be one, to prepare a memorial to the Legislature, representing the defects of the Act of Assembly for consolidating the City and County of Philadelphia into one municipality, so far as the same relates to the number and jurisdiction of the School Directors of the several Wards, and to request that a supplementary act may be passed to modify that act, so as to give a more perfect and harmonious field of action to School Directors, while it shall retain all the popular features of the new law, in order that the operation of the present matured and admirable system of Public Education may not be impaired or seriously disturbed.

Messrs. SMALL, WHARTON, BOOTH, COWPERTHWAIT and MILLER were appointed said Committee.

ROBERT J. HEMPHILL,

*Secretary.*

# REPORT.

The Committee appointed by the Board at its Special Meeting on the 1st inst., to prepare a Memorial to the Legislature, asking that the recent Act of Assembly, consolidating the City and County of Philadelphia into one municipality, may be so modified as to extend the jurisdiction and powers of the several Boards of School Directors,

Respectfully report: That they have prepared a Memorial, and also a Bill, or form of such a Supplementary Act of Assembly, as seems to be required. The Memorial and Bill are herewith submitted for the consideration of the Board, together with a tabular statement of the number of the several Grammar, Secondary, Primary and other Schools, in each of the new wards of the City.

Very respectfully,

Yours, &c.,

WM. F. SMALL,
AND. MILLER,
E. BOOTH,
G. M. WHARTON,
} *Committee.*

*Philadelphia, Feb.* 28, 1854.

# MEMORIAL

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met.*

The Memorial of the Board of Controllers of the Public Schools of the First School District of Pennsylvania, composed of the consolidated City of Philadelphia,

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS:

That in their opinion, the Act of Assembly for consolidating this City and County into one Municipality, approved February 2, 1854, so far as it relates to Public Schools and the jurisdiction of the Controllers and Directors of the same, is defective, and requires, as we feel assured it will receive, some modification and revision at your hands, before it goes into effect. During the pendency of the Bill, we were not in any way, officially, consulted in reference to its details, and are therefore in nowise responsible for any omissions or defects in the matter of Public School arrangements.

The Act referred to declares (section 21) that "For School purposes each Ward shall constitute a School Section, and the Board of Controllers shall have full power to apportion the School Houses, and distribute the duties of the Directors of the Schools to and for all or any of the Wards of the City, in such manner as the

Board of Controllers shall direct." This sentence, brief as it is, contemplates a thorough change in the system under which our Public Schools have grown to their present importance and usefulness, and it would be difficult to express, in fewer words, a more complete disruption of the elements of that system. An analysis of this sentence will exhibit its true import.

1st. Each Ward is a distinct School Section. Its Directors, are elected by the people of the Ward, and are entirely independent of all other Wards "for School purposes," and yet, as will be seen hereafter, they have no power, and can perform no duties whatever, for any purpose, without the authority of the Board of Controllers.

2d. As each Ward thus constitutes a distinct School Section, it will appear by the annexed table, that some of them will possess more, and some less, than a due proportion of the several kinds of Schools, and more or less than the necessities of their citizens demand. For instance, the Fourteenth Ward has four Grammar, one Secondary, and nine Primary Schools, while the Twelfth Ward has no Grammar, five Secondary, and five Primary Schools. The Sixteenth Ward has two Grammar, no Secondary, and eight Primary Schools, while the Thirteenth Ward has one Grammar, no Secondary, and five Primary Schools. In other Wards similar disproportions, to a greater or less extent, exist, and in none is there an exact relative proportion of the several kinds of Schools.

3d. But to remedy this difficulty, the Act of Assembly proposes that "the Board of Controllers shall have full power to *apportion* the School Houses," "to and for all and any of the Wards," in such a manner as they may choose to direct. How shall this apportionment be made, so as to avoid injustice and favoritism? Is it to be supposed that the Controllers can avoid listening to the earnest solicitations of friends, or that they will be able, however frank and disinterested, to repress the natural rivalries of Sections contending for favorite Schools? We think not, and we believe that, however well disposed to impartial selections, the Controllers will be liable to err in making them, and that feelings of hostility will be engendered among the sectional boards, that may, and probably will, impair their usefulness.

4th. Another fruitful source of discontent will be found in the remaining branch of the section quoted. The Board of Controllers are not only empowered to apportion the School Houses, but they are authorized to "distribute the duties of the Directors of the Schools to and for *all or any* of the Wards of the City, in such manner as (they) the Board of Controllers may direct." This passage seems to nullify that declaring each Ward a separate Section "for School purposes," because a Director elected in the First Ward may be detailed by the Controllers for duty in any other Ward to which they may think proper to "direct" him. The integrity of the Sections is destroyed by the superior power of the

Board of Controllers, as there are no purposes for which a Ward can constitute a Section, except those incident to the power of its Directors in visiting, directing and supervising its Schools. The power of the Controllers in this respect is unlimited, and a Director who may be chosen in and for one Ward may be transferred, without appeal, to other Wards, among teachers, schools and citizens of whom he has no personal knowledge. Heretofore, the Controllers have never exercised such powers, and we can conceive of no possible inducement or necessity for conferring such powers upon them. Their duties have hitherto been, very properly, confined to the building and furnishing of School Houses, and to the supplying of books and stationery necessary to their operation and management. Their powers and duties were designed to insure a harmonious system in the Schools, and while they restricted the local Boards in their expenditures, left them free in the exercise of their authority over their own particular Sections and Schools. To subject the Sections to the absolute direction of the Controllers, would be to establish a central despotism, which, if it would not destroy the system of public instruction now pursued in our Schools, would introduce jealousies subversive of its true and, at present, harmonious spirit.

But there is another serious defect in the law under consideration, which your wisdom should at once supply. It is this. No provision is made for the election of

Teachers of the Schools, and we are left to conjecture whether the local Boards of Directors, the Visiting Directors, or the joint Boards of the several Sections are to elect Teachers. As the School Houses are to be apportioned among the several Wards, it will hardly be contended that the Directors in the Ward in which the School is located should have the exclusive choice of Teachers. Other Wards may be more particularly and directly interested in the maintenance of the School, and should at least have an equal share in the election of its Teachers.

For these reasons, and others more obvious, and therefore not requiring notice from us, we respectfully ask that those portions of the law referred to may be so modified as to enlarge the School Sections, by uniting the densely populated Wards into convenient groups, for School purposes, and by restoring to the School Directors the power of managing their own Schools, without the interference of the Board of Controllers, and conferring upon them the power to choose their Teachers as heretofore, that the admirable system of Public Instruction, which has reflected so much advantage and honor upon our City, may be preserved in its integrity.

# AN ACT

RELATING TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE FIRST SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same,* That the Twenty-first Section of the Act of Assembly, approved the Second day of February, 1854, entitled "A further Supplement to an Act entitled 'An Act to incorporate the City of Philadelphia,'" shall be and is hereby so far altered and amended as to divide the City of Philadelphia into Nine School Sections, as follows:

*First Section*—The First, Second, Third and Fourth Wards of said City, shall constitute the First School Section.

*Second Section*—The Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Wards, shall constitute the Second Section.

*Third Section*—The Eleventh, Twelfth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Wards, shall constitute the Third Section.

*Fourth Section*—The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Twentieth Wards, shall constitute the Fourth Section.

*Fifth Section*—The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Wards shall constitute the Fifth Section.

*Sixth Section*—The Twenty-first Ward shall constitute the Sixth Section.

*Seventh Section*—The Twenty-second Ward shall constitute the Seventh Section.

*Eighth Section*—The Twenty-third Ward shall constitute the Eighth Section.

*Ninth Section*—The Twenty-fourth Ward shall constitute the Ninth School Section of said City; and the Directors elected in the said several Sections, shall meet for the purpose of organizing themselves into a Board, at the time and in the manner prescribed in the said twenty-first section of the Act of Assembly aforesaid.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted, &c.,* That the present Board of Controllers of the First School District shall, at least ten days before the day fixed by the aforesaid Act of Assembly, for the first meeting of the Directors of the Public Schools in said District, designate and publish in at least two daily papers published in Philadelphia, the hours and places at which the Directors shall so meet, and thereafter the several Boards of Directors shall, by standing resolutions, prescribe the times and places for their annual organizations.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted, &c.,* That so much of the aforesaid Act of Assembly, approved February 2,

1854, as gives to the Board of Controllers the power to apportion the School Houses, and distribute the duties of the Directors of the Schools, to and for all and any of the Wards of the City of Philadelphia, and so much of the said Act as is inconsistent with this Act, be, and the same is, hereby repealed.

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## Office of the Controllers of Public Schools,

First School District of Pennsylvania.

*Philadelphia, March 1st*, 1854.

At a Meeting of the Controllers of Public Schools, First District of Pennsylvania, held at the Controllers' Chamber, on Wednesday, March 1, 1854, the following Resolution was adopted:

*Resolved*, That the Report of the Committee be adopted, the Memorial and Bill approved, and the Committee be authorized to print the same, and furnish each member of the Legislature with at least one copy.

ROBERT J. HEMPHILL,

*Secretary.*

# STATEMENT

*Of the Location of Public Schools.*

| WARDS. | NUMBER & KINDS OF SCHOOLS IN EACH. | | | | TOTAL. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Grammar. | Secondary. | Primary. | Unclassified. | |
| 1st Ward, | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 11 |
| 2d " | 2 | 2 | 9 | | 13 |
| 3d " | 2 | 4 | 11 | | 17 |
| 4th " | 2 | 1 | 6 | | 9 |
| 5th " | 4 | 1 | 6 | | 11 |
| 6th " | 2 | 2 | 5 | | 9 |
| 7th " | 2 | 3 | 6 | | 11 |
| 8th " | 2 | | 5 | | 7 |
| 9th " | 2 | 1 | 7 | | 10 |
| 10th " | 2 | 3 | 4 | | 9 |
| 11th " | 2 | 2 | 7 | | 11 |
| 12th " | | 5 | 5 | | 10 |
| 13th " | 1 | 1 | 5 | | 7 |
| 14th " | 4 | 1 | 9 | | 14 |
| 15th " | 2 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 13 |
| 16th " | 2 | | 8 | | 10 |
| 17th " | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 5 |
| 18th " | 2 | 2 | 9 | | 13 |
| 19th " | 2 | | 8 | | 10 |
| 20th " | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| 21st " | 4 | | 7 | 6 | 17 |
| 22d " | 3 | | 9 | 3 | 15 |
| 23d " | 6 | 2 | 7 | 12 | 27 |
| 24th " | 2 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 18 |